

A B I L E

To provide for the conferring of an award to be known as the
United States Medal of Merit.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,

DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

SECTION 1. It is the purpose of the Congress, by providing public recognition for outstanding accomplishments in public affairs, social betterment, science, health and medicine, education, letters, arts, law, engineering, agriculture, labor, industry, and related fields, to foster those cultural qualities and innovations essential to the development of a high civilization and conducive to the maintenance of peace, which are of paramount importance to humanity at all times.

UNITED STATES MEDAL OF MERIT

Sec. 2. There is hereby established the United States Medal of Merit, with accompanying appurtenances and devices, for award as hereinafter provided to persons who have distinguished themselves by outstanding accomplishments in the fields listed in section 1.

UNITED STATES MEDAL OF MERIT BOARD

Sec. 3. (a) There is hereby established a United States Medal of Merit Board (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") to be composed of five members to be appointed by the President from

among persons of recognized competence in the fields listed in section 1. Each member shall hold office for a term of five years, except that (1) any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which his predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of such term, and (2) the terms of the members first taking office shall expire as follows: one shall expire with the close of the first calendar year which begins after the enactment of this Act, one with the close of the second such calendar year, one with the close of the third such calendar year, one with the close of the fourth such calendar year, and one with the close of the fifth such calendar year, as designated by the President at the time of appointment. The President shall from time to time designate a member of the Board to serve as its chairman.

(b) The members of the Board, while attending meetings of the Board, shall receive compensation at the rate of \$50 per diem, and shall be paid travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law (5 U.S.C. 73b-2) for persons in the Government service employed intermittently.

ARTICLES OF THE BOARD

Sec. 4. (a) The Board shall, during December of each year, recommend to the President a list of citizens of the United States who shall in the judgment of the Board have made the most notable contributions, not necessarily in the year concerned, in public affairs, social betterment, science, health and medicine,

education, letters, arts, law, engineering, agriculture, labor, industry, and related fields, to receive the United States Medal of Merit. In considering potential candidates for awards, the Board shall weigh carefully the relative merits of contributions in the public interest and welfare of great potential effect but not yet widely acclaimed, as compared with contributions already well known and appreciated.

(b) The Board is also authorized to make recommendations to the President for the conferring of the United States Medal of Merit posthumously upon citizens of the United States in belated recognition of outstanding accomplishments during their lives. Persons so honored posthumously shall include only those deceased during the previous twenty-five years.

(c) The Board is also authorized to make recommendations to the President, and to accept such recommendations from him, for the conferring of the United States Medal of Merit upon noncitizens who in the estimation of the Board have conspicuously forwarded the public welfare in the broader realm of international relations.

(d) No award of the United States Medal of Merit shall be made except in accordance with the recommendations of the Board. All transactions of the Board with respect to the selection of candidates for awards shall be confidential.

(e) The Board shall select the design of the United States Medal of Merit and of accompanying appurtenances and devices, and the design of a parchment testimonial to accompany the Medal,

and may contract for the designing and making of the Medal and the testimonial in such manner as it deems advisable.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Sec. 5. (a) The chief administrative officer of the Board shall be a Secretary who shall be appointed by the Chairman with the approval of the Board. The Secretary shall perform such duties as may be directed by the Board. The Board is authorized to appoint such technical, clerical, and other assistants and to make such expenditures, within the limits of appropriations available therefor, as may be necessary for conducting its business.

(b) There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

CONFERRING OF HONORS

Sec. 6. On January 1 of each year, or as soon thereafter as may be convenient, the President shall, in a suitable ceremony, confer personally upon those persons recommended to him by the Board the United States Medal of Merit and shall at the same time present to each person honored an engrossed parchment testimonial recording the conferral of the award and the accomplishments or contributions for which the award is made. In the case of a posthumous award, the medal and testimonial shall be presented to a representative of the deceased person being honored, to be designated by the Board.